

The newsletter of the B.C. Science Fiction
Association

#395

\$3.00

April 2006



*Slowly Graeme realized his editor was possessed
(Felicity Walker Photo)*

April Fool's issue

(Do you believe that?)

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| There Is No Spoon (editorial about the Auroras and fannish activities)... | 1 |
| Online Discourse..... | 3 |
| Fish and Bicycles (letters)..... | 5 |
| Birthdays | 14 |
| Ads | 15 |
| Quiche upon Concrete (local events)..... | 16 |
| Clams are Returning (regional cons and other events)..... | 18 |
| Know This Stuff (news) | 25 |
| Last Guest Con (report by M. Citrak)..... | 35 |
| Books (reviews by D. McMahon)..... | 35 |
| Media File (interview with R. Seredin about Dr. Who)..... | 40 |
| Last Words (more ads)..... | 45 |

Inside Cover

BCSFAzine © April 2006, Volume 34, #4, Issue #395 is the monthly club newsletter published by the British Columbia Science Fiction Association, a social organization. An e-mail membership (including email delivery of the newsletter in PDF or TXT format) is \$15.00 per year; new memberships are \$26.00 per year; membership renewals are \$25.00 per year; a New Family membership (including 2 votes in WCSFA meetings) is \$32.00. Please send membership renewals to the Treasurer at 7064 No. 1 Road, Richmond, BC V7C 1T6. These prices include subscription to *BCSFAzine*. Make cheques payable to WCSFA (West Coast Science Fiction Association). (NOTE: The West Coast Science Fiction Association is a separate, officially registered society.) For comments, subscriptions, suggestions, and/or submissions, write to: *BCSFAzine*, c/o Box 15335, VMPO, Vancouver, BC, CANADA V6B 5B1, or email garthspencer@shaw.ca.

BCSFA Executive

President & Archivist: R. Graeme Cameron, 604-526-7522
Vice President (incumbent): Doug Finnerty, 604-526-5621
Treasurer: Kathleen Moore-Freeman, 604-277-0845
Secretary: Barb Dryer, 604-263-0472
Editor: Garth Spencer, 604-325-7314
Keeper of FRED Book, VCon Ambassador for Life: Steve Forty, 604-936-4754

BCSFAzine is printed most excellently by the good people at **Copies Plus, at 1950 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, tel. 604-731-7868.**

BCSFAzine is distributed monthly at WHITE DWARF BOOKS, 3715 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6R 2G5, tel. 604-228-8223; email whitedwarf@deadwrite.com. Single copies \$3.00 each.

Our email list: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bc_scifi_assoc/

BCSFA's events this month

- Feeding Frenzy:** Apr. 8, 7 pm at Samba Brazilian Steakhouse, 1122 Alberni Street, Vancouver, BC
- BCSFAzine deadline:** Fri. Apr. 14 at FRED
- BCSFA meeting/party:** Sat. Apr. 15, 7 p.m., at Kathleen Moore-Freeman's, 7064 No. 1 Road, Richmond; phone 604-277-0845 for directions.
- Book discussion:** third Thursday evening at Our Town Café on Broadway near Main St.; check with Doug Finnerty for date and book.
- BCSFAzine production:** Fri. Apr. 28, early distribution at FRED
- Kaffeeklatsch:** Sat. Apr. 22, 7 p.m. at Garth Spencer's place, 82 East 40th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. BRING IDEAS. Be original.

There Is No Spoon

I was going to put a special April Fool's editorial in this issue, probably a crank theory with diagrams and formulas and written in a nonexistent language; but while time was running out, I reviewed the clubzines we received, and in *The Ottawa SF Statement* I discovered this year's Aurora Awards nominating ballot. I realized there was little time before the deadline (April 17th), and I still had no idea who or what was eligible.

While I was soliciting entries for the eligibility list, an online discussion developed about some omissions in Auroras procedure. I gathered that Dennis Mullin used to prepare a list of eligible works on his own initiative, but I guess that died of attrition, or lack of time. Come to think of it, rather a lot about the Aurora Awards depends on people having a lot of motivation and enthusiasm, and donating a lot of time and effort, on their own initiative.

On the evidence, though, *just assuming* that fans have that much moxie is not justified. If the Convention business meeting is serious about promoting Canadian SF with an award, they will also promote the award, and raise awareness of the eligible works; in fact, they will appoint— even hire — someone to do this job, and make the position an enduring institution. So far as I know, no Convention business meeting has ever discussed this rather obvious point.

Other people have raised other problems. Sandi-Marie McLaughlin (editor of *The Ottawa SF Statement*) has a problem with the “body of work” definition for the Artistic Achievement category. David Malinski gave up on the awards entirely after he witnessed ballot-stuffing at the Winnipeg Worldcon. (This amuses me, in view of the shabby way the Aurora Awards presentation was treated by that Worldcon committee.) John Mansfield still has an inarticulate resentment he can't quite spit out. I'm exasperated that an award intended to advertise Canadian science fiction was itself never adequately advertised, that the Auroras never succeeded in presenting or involving francophone writers, and in any case, the success of SF Canada and the Sunburst Awards may have rendered the Auroras unnecessary.

Are you going to Toronto Trek this summer to raise a stink at the Convention Business Meeting? Are the Aurora organizers, the Convention, the CUFF administrator really serious about what they're doing?

#

In fact, rather a *lot* of fannish institutions depend on large assumptions, about general fandom's motivations and interests: not just in Canada, as with Auroras and Convention and CUFF, but around the world. Seeing this, a detached observer with nothing at stake might even ask whether fannish fans were really serious about fannish fandom.

It appears to be basically fannish just to assume that fans, *qua* fans, will care or even *know* about awards for fan activities, or fanart that isn't comics -related, or conrunning for no profit, or fanhistory, or filksongs like “The Mimeo Man”, or fanwriting that isn't fanfiction, or pranks and hoaxes and hilarious written satires ... and the whole volunteer, do-it-yourself aesthetic. *DOING* stuff, making stuff, thinking things through; not just watching stuff, or imitating half-baked formulaic TV and film stuff.

If I weren't searching for a community, a substitute family really, and if I weren't profoundly influenced by novels like *The Dispossessed*, I might not have been so impressed with the fannish ethos.

What if it was *all* a put-on? And I fell for it?

It would explain a few things, about the last twenty-nine years. It would explain why I spent all that time trading fanzines, collecting fanhistories and fanthologies, trying to show people what fanzine fandom seemed to be about ... and only getting a minority response. (Maybe I should have gotten a clue at the beginning, I was only *going* to get a few fans answering me.) So I ended up sounding like the Jewish mother of fandom: noodzhing everybody, completely ignoring boundaries, and complaining about how most of the little bastards never *wrote* to me.

It would also explain why I failed actually to connect with fannish fans, when I finally did get to fanzine conventions. It would explain why I wasn't fannish enough, or didn't really get it. I wasn't supposed to. They weren't really serious.

#

Fannishness isn't about being serious; it's about taking nothing seriously. If I must, then I will make up my own scene, with my own ethos, if I have to invent a host of imaginary friends into the bargain. In fact that's why I started the Royal Swiss Navy, except real people started joining in. Now, I'm planning the RSN Marines Choir, Self-Appointed

Fannish Elite, the Liberal Secular Humanist Cult, the Frong artificial ethnic group, and the Anarcho-Imperialist Party.

What do you want to join in on?

Online Discourse

[from BCSFA email group]

RE: RADIO FREE CYBERTRON: A WORTHY GOAL FOR SAME TIME NEXT YEAR

Doug Finnerty <darthbuddy2000@yahoo.ca>, 25 Feb 2006

This is my long-delayed follow-up to Ray Seredin's efforts to agitate us to demand our own show on the community channel, and also a follow-up to Greg Slade's efforts to find out whatever happened to the Ether Patrol.

While it would be nice to mobilize 100,000 "geeks" (I decided to use a lower figure than Ray's simply because I'm too lazy to look up the right one), I want to see some proof that this can actually be done. I see two ways.

- 1) Get one percent (1,000) to attend VCon 31.
- 2) Get zero point two five percent (250) to join BCSFA.

Personally, I do not see us getting respect from anyone for organizing a small army. Especially organizing one without securing the proper event permits. Otherwise, I'll be cheering on the riot police.

What would command respect would be to provide proof that we can put together such a show. And to do that, we might have to actually produce a small number of "episodes" ourselves. And be prepared to shop them around to every suitable channel out there. Not just the Rogers and Shaw community channels. I think this could be done. We do have the talent. We just need some face-to-face brainstorming.

And also keep in mind that if we do go ahead on this, there will be no funding from BCSFA. In other words, our budget will be paid in blood, sweat and tears.

One baby step we could be doing would be to take over and/or resurrect "The Ether Patrol". My understanding that the rights to do such a show would remain with Co-Op Radio, and not the last guys who switched off the lights after the final episode. However, this will actually involve joining the Co-Op Radio station and being prepared to actually

volunteer their time with the Ether Patrol and possibly other programs with this radio station.

Any comments, questions, concerns?

Come now. Don't be shy.

Greg Slade replied on Feb. 26:

Both admirable goals. If we claim to speak for fans in BC (and, at least implicitly, we do), then we need to reach beyond the dwindling number who are connected via the channels with which we're all familiar, and find some way to connect to the 600 people (many wearing costumes) who packed into the Vogue during the showing of *The Return of the King* the night before the DVD went on sale, or the 230 (or whatever the latest number is) who are in the *Firefly/Serenity* Meetup Group, or even just all the people I see reading F/SF on the Seabus. I know the fans are out there, but we just haven't been connecting with them. (Well, okay, some people have: the largest group of people who regularly attend BIFF come from Meetup, and the second largest group have been lured out by Keith Lim's postings to the VAML list. So far, only two people have come out because of the flyers, and oddly enough they both showed up on the same night.) ...

Actually, I have been mulling for some time about the possibility of working up an hour-long documentary on the use of SF and fantasy imagery to sell mundane products. (Think, for example, of the M&Ms ad, with the two cartoon characters dealing with Darth Vader when the company brought out a dark chocolate version, or that gigantic blob of Marmite in the TV ad which was mentioned on the old BCSFA list some months back, or even the Honda Odyssey ads which had "Thus Spake Zarathustra", and what at first looked like the monolith from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, but turned out to be a sheet of plywood which somebody was fitting into the van.)

Just today, I thought of the idea of doing a documentary on science fiction cons, comparing a couple of clips from *Galaxy Quest* with interviews with assorted congoers of their congoing experiences. (Including some of the movers and shakers from early VCons, especially those who are no longer active in the fan community.)

I had also been thinking of suggesting a panel topic for VCon, pitting two "cool" fans (i.e. socially apt and physically attractive) against two fans who are, well, more like me, discussing the question of whether you have to be geeky to be a fan. Then, I realised that that would work just as well, and possibly even better, as a documentary.

So then I realised that, if we worked on it, and possibly mined panel topics from VCon (and maybe even filmed the panels), we could do up a

whole series of documentaries on fannish topics, for broadcast on the Knowledge Network, KCTS, Space, other cons...

((Greg has also suggested a concerted effort for BCSFA recruitment at the upcoming VCon. -GS))

Jo McBride Wilson responded on Feb. 27, 2006:

Here is a short film done regarding fans, and it made me both wince and laugh. *Fear of Girls* A long time ago BCSFA tried to get a show on cable, but we were given the run around and we didn't have the person-power to push or get together a demo reel. The Ether Patrol came together because one person really, really wanted it and then rounded up the volunteers and nagged often enough to make it happen. (I do miss Commander Cassandra at times. Perhaps next time VCon has a Bacchanal I'll bring out her costume ((ha! Wasted on radio, it involves leather, boots and very tight lacing)) and re-live some glory days.) There are hours and hours of recordings of panels that might be edited into very interesting shows for the net – what about conjuring up interest using what we've already got. How about a pod cast of Van Vogt's guest speech? Links to all the Guest of Honour Speeches from our Web page? Many of these folks are now dead, it'd be fascinating to hear their voices again. A few decades ago I invented a position in BCSFA called 'Outreach' because of wanting to reach all those other readers, I wanted to talk books with them. I think I learned most people aren't joiners.

Dale responded:

That sounds very cool. If they fall into a theme you might even consider pitching a show concept to "CBC Ideas". Make it new and old and you have an excuse to speak to latter day authors :-)

There's a number of very good free tools for audio editing (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>). It would be a shame to lose the recordings to magnetic entropy.

Fish and Bicycles

Greg Slade <grga@bluebottle.com>, 28 Feb 2006

I think it's necessary to point out, *à propos* of the conversation between you and Randy Barnhart about how J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis are part of an evil plot to restore absolute monarchy, that

Lewis has actually written about his political views, so nobody need speculate on what they might be. A passage from his essay "Is Progress Possible?" might prove instructive:

I do not like the pretensions of government—the grounds on which it demands my obedience—to be pitched too high. I don't like the medicine-man's magical pretensions, nor the Bourbon's Divine Right. This is not solely because I disbelieve in magic and in Bossuet's *Politique*. I believe in God, but I detest theocracy. For every government consists of mere men and is, strictly viewed, a makeshift; if it adds to its commands, 'Thus saith the Lord', it lies, and lies dangerously.

(Reproduced in *God in the Dock*, Eerdmans, 1970. p. 315.)

Or, in "Membership":

I believe in political equality. But there are two opposite reasons for being a democrat. You may think all men are so good that they deserve a share in the government of the commonwealth, and so wise that the commonwealth needs their advice. That is, in my opinion, the false, romantic doctrine of democracy. On the other hand, you may believe fallen men to be so wicked that not one of them can be trusted with any irresponsible power over his fellows.

(Reproduced in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, Collier, 1975. p. 113.)

You can disagree with the theology behind Lewis' (and Tolkien's) fiction, but there is no point in attacking his work on the basis of a supposed political stance which he did not, in fact, hold. It is more in keeping with Lewis' non-fiction writings to see the royalty theme in the Narnia stories as symbolic of a theme in Lewis' theology. (You might as well argue that Lois McMaster Bujold's Miles Vorkosigan books are a defence of feudalism.)

((Ma gavte la nata. *Did you actually think we were being serious??*))

It's cool that you're giving space on the advertising page to FANS, but please note the name change to BIFF. (And, hopefully before too very much longer, I'll be able to give you a new and improved URL for a BIFF web site which does *not* feature pop-up ads...)

Your essay on "To Be a Fan" clarifies your comment in an earlier issue, when you said that my list of suggested fannish Christmas

movies demonstrated that I don't understand what "fannish" means. For your definition of "fannish", you're quite right: if "fannish" only applies to a certain subset of fanzines, then, obviously, no film could ever possibly be "fannish", because no film has ever been produced on a mimeo machine. I can't help but thinking, though, that forcing a narrow definition on a word which has wide usage, and then insisting that nobody else understands what that word really means, is simply self-defeating. You simply can't communicate with others if you insist on using words differently than they do. (Not to mention the fact that I resent the implications of your remarks. If you declare that I don't get what it means to be fannish, and then proceed to define "fannish" fans as those who don't take themselves seriously, then you are implying that I take myself seriously, and that is an allegation up with which I will not put.)

((Greg, like many other fans, I continue to use "fannish" in the original sense. I point out to you the continued existence of many real fanzines, as shown on efanazines.com; I point out fannish conventions, such as Corflu and Ditto and Potlatch, and other fannish institutions, such as trufen.net. I'm not asking too much, if I keep inviting neofans to discover what "fannish" really means. Or meant.

((I was in fact led to expect fannish fandom here in Vancouver, not some unsatisfactory substitute under the same name. I came looking for a community and just found a hobby group. It feels like a case of false advertising.

((And still I take your point: until you heard of fannish websites, you had no clues to fannish fandom; people don't speak my language around here, and there's no reason our contemporaries should know what real fandom was about.

((I shall have to finish my paper proving that nobody really speaks English anymore, but a language almost, but not quite entirely unlike English.))

As to what I want to see in *BCFAzine*, that's easy: more reviews, more (original) fiction, more humour (*à la* "Ask Mr. Science" or "Dr. Know" or "Fan Slanders"), upcoming events (albeit with a bit more emphasis on events which have something to do with SF, or fantasy, or gaming, or space), maybe some fact pieces on space travel and astronomy, or on writing and/or filmmaking, some history of BC fandom for those of us who came late to the party (like how FRED got started in the first place), and, if you don't mind, less whining on how the rest of us don't

live up to your expectations. You catch more flies with honey, and all that...

I'm sorry to hear of Doug's imminent departure. He's a good bloke, and will be hard to replace.
((Boy howdy.))

Scott Warner acgypsy_9@hotmail.com, March 14, 2006

Dear Mr. Vereschagin,

The 30th Anniversary of the Mensa SF+F SIG will be celebrated in the May/June 2006 issue. This will be the 172nd edition of our newsletter, *InterdiMensional Journal*. Enclosed as an attachment is Page 1 of the article I have written to commemorate the occasion. If you would like to wish us Happy Birthday, please contact me at the enclosed email address.

((I wrote Scott Warner back to tell him I wasn't Dave Vereschagin. Vereschagin is an artist who used to be a fanartist and faneditor in 1970s Edmonton fandom.))

Michael J. Bertrand <fruvous@reddra.com>, 18 Mar 2006

Dear so-called BSCFAns:

It has come to the attention of the leaders of our august organization that there is another BCSFA out there, sullyng our good name with nonsense about fantasy, science fiction, and other Communist rubbish. On behalf of all our members, I would like to warn you strongly against this persistent and flagrant violation of the sacred name of our highly respected and world-renowned organization, or I am afraid the actions we take will be both dire and expensive!

Preposterous D. Nomenclature, President
 The REAL BCSFA
 Balloon-tying Clowns Sycophantically Fawning over Avians

((Proceed from your front door north-northeast for 300 metres. Dig 8 metres downward. Rebury the artifact you find there under a hawthorn bush. Not only will you find water, the leprechauns will be obligated to protect the pot of gold you just found. But be on guard for any machinations designed to reclaim the pot for their clan. Read The Pot of Gold, by James Stephens.))

Lloyd & Yvonne Penney, 1706-24 Eva Rd., Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B2,
penneys@allstream.net, March 16, 2006

Here I am, skirting the deadline once more, riding the ragged edge of disaster. Some comments on *BCSFAzine* 394 will follow.

Thinking as a hobby...there's been lots of discussion in the past about thinking outside the box, a smack upside the head, thinking in an unusual direction. I would have thought that this ability allows us to enjoy SF. Those who don't like it seem unable to wrap their heads around certain ideas, and they give up. For the general public, research is too much to ask, as is clear thinking. Heck, thinking by itself seems too much to ask.

(I don't think we're adapted to industrial life. Maybe we're not a viable species in any case. Maybe trace pollution in our diets is depressing the general level of intelligence. Or maybe some practical joker shifted me into an alternative universe populated by beings almost, but not quite entirely unlike fully-qualified humans. I wonder how long ago that happened?)

Yes, this winter has been weird. January was warmer than February, and now March's temperatures are below normal, and there are but a few scraps of snow or ice here and there. This has become the typical winter in Toronto; seldom have we seen snowbanks. We've had some great Vancouver weather here recently; lots of rain and fog.

I think China Miéville has come down against Tolkien and Lewis because they promote the monarchy and the church. When you see what era their books come from, is anyone surprised? The LOTR and Narnia movies have been successful because they show a sane, comfortable, demarcated world of wonder and warmth. In this insane age, who doesn't want those images instead? Miéville writes of a more realistic and dirty world; gritty, but too real for some. This is why he's considered cutting edge. Meanwhile, I know some people who would happily move to Middle-Earth to meet elves and hobbits, and to live in a small home with bread and jam for elevenses.

(Thus demonstrating how we prefer illusions to reality, even in our fantasies. If you really read the Narnia and LOTR cycles, you see a pseudo-medieval world thrown into periodic crises, not a safe, stable, comfortable world.)

My loc...I don't know how many people there are on the current Toronto Trek committee, but we do know all the chairmen (there are 4

co-chairs this year), and they all know us. We are working with some of them with Gaylaxicon, too. I am not surprised about the reaction of some

on the committee when it comes to guests, though...over the past few years, I have heard that some local mediafans consider the con suite, the green room, the staff lounge and anything to do with hospitality to be a waste of money, money that could be spent getting better actor guests. To my knowledge, Toronto Trek has not had a FanGoH since the last time Yvonne and I ran it, Toronto Trek Celebration 2 back in the mid-80s. Yvonne's current plans for that weekend are to be flying at the Guelph airport, anyway. Even if she were asked, I think she'd turn them down. Canvention is that weekend, and I hope people are still working on their nominations, or have mailed them in. These Auroras have to work, or they will suddenly fail, and all we'll have are the Sunburst Awards, which are jury-selected, and we will lose our franchise.

((What do you mean when you say "franchise"?)

Inquiring minds want to know.

((Look, the difficulty you and I are working with is that we go to something called "fandom," and instead of fannish fandom we get something else under the same name. It would make better sense to me if different leisure interest groups used labels that weren't confusingly similar, but I guess that's too much to expect, now isn't it?))

Just out of curiosity...how many BCSFAns are also members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, the Canadian Space Society, the Planetary Society or the Mars Society?

((Good question. In fact until recently I wasn't sure BCSFAns knew these societies existed. Upcoming meetings of some of these societies are listed before the con calendar this issue.))

There's a CreationCon next weekend...could someone contact the BC Solicitor-General's Office, or Ministry of Taxation, and ask if Creation pays their taxes provincially and federally? They don't do business in Ontario any more because we asked that question of the Ontario ministries. Once asked, I suspect that Creation will disappear like themist.

((There is some question whether this is in fact a Creation Con.))

Ad Astra has had some serious guest of honour problems which are detailed on its website, but I can report that author Kelly Armstrong and artist Martin Springett have been added as guests. Just two weeks off, and I have just about everything I need to get done, done. After Ad Astra, our own convention schedule looks diverse... In April is Eeriecon 8 in

Niagara Falls, NY, and we're only going there for the day, but we'll be starting it with a trip to the Niagara Aerospace Museum. I'll get to my first

(and probably only) Corflu in May. Yvonne will be at the 2006 International Space Development Conference in Los Angeles at the same time. After that is LACon IV.

((I just got a Corflu progress report. Hope you enjoy yourself. Must be nice to have a steady income.))

The definition of fandom...the idea of nailing Jell-O to the wall comes to mind. Fannishness seems to mean an interest in science fiction in all forms, plus an interest in a variety of fannish activities, and things creative, weird and humorous. Some say I'm fannish, others say I'm not, and all I can say is that Your Mileage May Vary. I'm enjoying myself, I'm doing things I like to do, I'm shifting my priorities and leaving some interests behind to take on newer ones. When it comes to Corflu, I hope to enjoy myself and be a part of the general group. If it happens, great! If not, I shall nonetheless continue on with what I like to do. I will try to take part in discussions and chat with all and sundry, if they are willing.

FRED POLL...not referring to the science fiction writer, are you? J
(Yes, I know it's Pohl...)

((I really didn't realize I had made that pun until I reread BCSFAzine.))

Cosmic Ray...I haven't been watching any SF shows lately because of evening work. I rarely watch Space:TIS because they seem to show reruns, and have no intention of involving themselves with their audience. One show I tried to watch faithfully was *The Outer Limits*, mostly shot in Vancouver, but Global Television would pre-empt it or shift it to another time slot without warning. I figure I've seen about a half of the episodes, and I'd like to see the rest. I think the reason the Fourth Doctor looks about 72 is that's how old Tom Baker is.

BSCFAZINEzine Volume 1, Number 43.394, Friday 17 March 2006
BCSFAZINEzine is from Felicity Walker, #209-3851 Francis Road,
Richmond, BC, V7C 1J6, felicity4711@hotmail.com.

Thinking as a Hobby: Gernsback's Fallacy assumes that fans read SF because they want to read about science with a little fiction. I read SF because I like interesting stories. My scientific education is limited: no-one told me that there are limitations on energy, or the strength of materials, or what kinds of impacts and performance people can take, much less show me how to use that information.

Foucault's Pendulum is a bit of a hard slog, and mostly depressing.
((Gee, I thought it was the funniest thing since Ronald Reagan.))

I'm sick right now, but when I feel better, I'll make a list of what fannish things interest me.

Ignorant Armies Clash - Randy Barnhart: I can't blame media SF fans for looking to media SF for comfort. On the other hand, you seem to have found a case of media SF that does more than make us feel comfortable and nice: V.

To Be a Fan:

To be a fan
 Must be the sweetest feeling that a girl can feel
 To be a fan
 To live a dream
 With a zine you care about like no one else
 A special zine
 A dearest zine
 Who needs to share its LOCs with you alone
 Who'll hold you close and feel things
 That only fandom brings
 To know that your fandom is your own...

To be my zine
 A zine must be much more than any other zine
 To be my zine
 To share my dream
 My zine must take me where no other can
 Where we will find
 A brand new world
 A world of things we've never seen before
 Where silver suns have golden moons
 Each year has thirteen Junes
 That's what must be for me
 To be a fan

Sheryl Birkhead, March 2006

You know, excuses should only go so far ... I have right here in front of me Dec. Jan, Feb, and March issues. Whew – talk about bug-lazy – I apologize!

((Garth's law #2: Everyone has too much on their plates. You have nothing to apologize for.))

I try to be careful when I write – you can't see facial expressions, or see “tongue in cheek.” The same is even MORE important in e-mails – or at least, misinterpretations seem even MORE rampant. So if something is important, I MAY try a real letter, but I'd prefer a phone call or visit, or at the very least, be very willing to re-discuss any red-button issues.

((I've never been impressed with the “must have been missing your facial expression/ tone of voice/ etc.” excuses for misunderstanding written words. I have always believed, all of the information must be contained in the words. Your mileage may vary. But if people don't write to be understood, they're not communicating. People who don't communicate aren't fully-qualified people, in my eyes. I'm rigid that way.

((Since I write, the burden is on me to express everything clearly. That's fair enough. Since I'm dealing with actual humans, I have to compensate for their inattention, incomprehension, fallacies, misunderstandings, deliberate stupidities, failure to respond, and refusal to speak for themselves. That's unfair, but that's life.))

Gee – I didn't know SMOFCon offered scholarships (or more correctly, presented) – way to go!

I'm cat-sitting for the Lynches (who have cable TV); I see that the new Dr. Who series has just begun here. I had wondered if/where it had gone. I don't follow media stuff, so I just remembered it was going to happen, but that was some time ago. Ah, but it will be quite a bit longer if it gets to regular TV.

I get some of the zines you list, but not all – and that's a good thing.

Most of the inertia you describe seems pretty typical, and not just of fans. Many are willing to follow, but only if someone does all the work to lead.

Just a thought, prodded into existence by both your comment and Lloyd's about Toronto Trek: is there anyone involved enough to create a history (in the vein of Worldcon creations) of fen and accomplishments? Just thought I'd ask.

((Sounds like a great idea. Let's see if someone is motivated enough to do it. There is a distinct disconnect, I infer, between TT20's concom and the fen and accomplishments you mention. If they're not interested, then no-one will do it.))

Hmm ... fannish ... in college: none ... in grad school (at Penn State) I helped start an SF club, mainly a group that had a history of reading in common. In veterinary school I was too busy, but I did (for

14

two years at least) check out the local SF con (VPI); but there was no sense of a common history with them. So I've found more of a common history with fanzine fen than fans "in the flesh".

Out of curiosity: I believe *voting* in CUFF is restricted to Canadians; what about donating? If so, what currency is acceptable? Just thought I'd ask.

((You're right about voting. CUFF will accept donations from anyone, and sporadically people have been offering goods for sale, but it's been a while since we advertised a list of items. I really ought to find out whether Brian Davis, the current fund administrator, has a website up yet, or whether he accepts donations in his name, or made out to CUFF.

((U.S. funds are accepted anywhere in Canada, and in fact a U.S.-funds cheque will be accepted by any bank or business in our country, although different places offer different exchange rates. Alternatively, you could shop around and see which services gave you the best deal on Canadian-funds money orders.))

We Also Heard From:

M. Beulah Wadsworth, who resubscribed, informed me about her eCOAs, and appreciated the work on the directory.

Birthdays

Restraining orders prevent me from making up backgrounds for most of the following members:

2: Bob Wilson (aka The Goat with a Thousand Young, role model for Austin Powers)

7: Lance Munro (aka The Pobble Who Has No Toes, superhero protector of disabled pedestrians)

13: Marilyn Blew (aka "Dot" Matrix)

14: Lea Rush (aka The Good Witch of the West)

15: Frederika Witherspoon-Li (aka the Intrepid Uniped)

16: John Mullock (aka Bicycle Repairman)

- 16: Patrick Kernaghan (aka Lame Thief of the Waingunga, gifted with the power to find that last reference book you hoped no-one would find so you could finish the damned thesis on time)
- 24: Rhea Rose (aka the Wordslinger, fastest poet west of the Red River)
- 26: William Blew (aka Norman French)
- 27: Michael/Dani Dezotell (aka the Yankee Clippers, the most dangerous hairstylists in Washington State)
- ? Ken Dawe (aka the Giant Rat of Sumatra)
- 27: Joe Devoy: (aka the Chicken of Bristol) The putative love child of the Green Goblin and Linda Hunt, "Joe Cool" enjoys drive-by sketchings, moonlit walks through abandoned warehouse districts, and plotting to take over the world. All Hail Emperor Joe! Become my willing thralls!
- ? Laida Candle - Inventor of the Birthday
- ? Herbal T - Vegetarian rapper
- ? The Late Tarry Overlong
- ? Dan Druff - Head and Shoulders founder
- ? Moe Juiced - Famed raconteur

Ads

The following advertisers offer a 10% DISCOUNT to card-carrying WCSFA members:

MICHAEL'S BOOKS

Michael Elmer, Owner
109 Grand
Bellingham, WA 98225
USA
Tel. (206) 733-6272
Books in all fields "We pay cash for
hardback & paperback."

IMPERIAL HOBBIES

5451 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC, V6X 2C7
(Across from Lansdowne Mall)
Tel. 604-273-4427, fax 273-2916
Role-playing games, tabletop
games, models, comics, supplies,
and much more! (Discount applies
to selected items)

BCSFAzine is on sale at
WHITE DWARF BOOKS
4368 W. 10th Avenue
tel. 604-228-8223 for hours

DRAGONFLY MUSIC
106 Harrison Village Mall
196 Esplanade (Box 118)
Harrison Hot Springs, BC, V0M
1K0 Tel. 604-796-9289

WRIGLEY - CROSS BOOKS

PMB 455
2870 NE Hogan Road, Suite E
Gresham OR 97030
Phone (503) 667-0807
Toll Free (877) 694-1467
<http://www.wrigleycrossbooks.com>
books@wrigleycrossbooks.com

B.I.F.F.

(formerly F.A.N.S.)
Play trivia, watch videos, and
generally hang out every Friday
night from 7:00 p.m. until closing
at: Eighties Restaurant, 110 West
14th Street, North Vancouver. See
<http://www.eightiesrestaurant.com>
for more details.

The Sound of Quiche upon Concrete

WEEKLY EVENTS

Monday

Astronomy Café is an informal weekly gathering of people interested in Astronomy. Every Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Bruno Quenneville, the Vice President of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada: Victoria Centre.
(<http://victoria.rasc.ca/events/AstroCafe/Default.htm>) (Greg Slade)

Tuesday

Kamloops Anime Club
(<http://www.geocities.com/kamloopsanimeclub/>)
holds casual meetings on Tuesdays from 6:30 to 10:00 p.m. at Boston Pizza in downtown Kamloops. (Note that the meeting times and locations are occasionally different, so check the schedule on the Kamloops Anime Club web site if you are planning to attend.) (Greg Slade)

Thursdays

Ink Studs (comix radio show) from 2 pm to 3 pm on CITR (101.9 FM or <http://citr.ca/live.rm>); <http://inkstuds.livejournal.com/> (Julian Castle)

Fridays

5pm to 6pm: Hi-Sci-Fi (science-fiction radio show) on 90.1 FM and <http://www.cjsf.ca/listen/listen.m3u>
Info and archived shows at <http://www.hiscifi.com/index.php?cat=Show> (Julian Castle)

Saturday

Kamloops Anime Club
(<http://www.geocities.com/kamloopsanimeclub/>)
holds its main meetings on Saturdays from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. downstairs at High Octane Comics & Collectibles, 250 3rd Avenue, Kamloops. (Greg Slade)

*MONTHLY EVENTS*Second Tuesday

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada: Okanagan Centre
(<http://www.ocrasc.ca/>) meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 in the Science Building at Okanagan College on KLO Road, Kelowna. (Note that the Vernon and Kelowna meetings are occasionally combined, so check the schedule on the RASC: Okanagan Centre web site if you are planning to attend.) (Greg Slade)

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada: Vancouver Centre
(<http://www.pcis.com/rascvan/>) meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m., downstairs in the auditorium of the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, 1100 Chestnut Street, Vancouver. Each meeting usually has a program which is a blend of current astronomical research and local amateur activities. The meeting is followed by an informal gathering at the Gordon MacMillan Southam Observatory for coffee, cookies and conversation. Visitors are welcome to attend most meetings, which are free. (Greg Slade)

Second Wednesday

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada: Victoria Centre

(<http://victoria.rasc.ca/>) meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m., in the Elliott Lecture Theatre, Room 060, University of Victoria. (Note that the meeting times and locations are occasionally different, so check the schedule on the RASC: Victoria Centre web site if you are planning to attend.) (Greg Slade)

Last Wednesday

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada: Okanagan Centre
(<http://www.ocrasc.ca/>) meets on the last Wednesday of the month at 7:15 p.m. at the Okanagan Science Centre, 2704 Highway 6, Vernon. (Note that the Vernon and Kelowna meetings are occasionally combined, so check the schedule on the RASC: Okanagan Centre web site if you are planning to attend.) (Greg Slade)

Royal Astronomical Society of Canada: Prince George Centre
(<http://www.vts.bc.ca/pgrasc/>) meets on the last Wednesday of the month from August to November and January to May from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Prince George Astronomical Observatory (20 km South West of Prince George near West Lake on Tedford Road.) Topics of discussion include astronomy viewing tips, constellations, star charts, photography and much more. The meetings are informal and visitors are welcome. (Greg Slade)

North! The Clams Are Returning!

April 2006

April 1-2: **4th Annual Emerald City ComicCon** at the Qwest Field Exhibition Center in Seattle, WA. A comics-related convention which drew 6000 in April 2005. Multiple comic artist guests. Hotel is Springhill Suites Seattle by Marriott. Tickets through Ticketmaster, available in 2006. See www.emeraldcitycomiccon.com.

April 1: **Nishikaze II** (a spring anime festival) at the University of Lethbridge (Anderson Hall), Lethbridge, AB. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$2 or non-perishable food donation. See <http://www.nishikaze.org/> for more information.

April 2 – on this date in 1968, *2001: A Space Odyssey* premiered in the United States.

April 6 – on this date in 1992, Isaac Asimov died.

April 8 and 9: **Book Sale** at Thompson Community Centre 5151 Granville Avenue Lynas Lane at Granville Avenue (between No. 2 Rd & Railway Ave.) Richmond. New and used books, hardcover and paperback fiction, Art books, Classics, Chinese and Other Language books, Books for children and so much more! Sponsored by: Friends of the Richmond Public Library All proceeds benefit Richmond libraries.

Julian Castle, March 17, 2006

April 9: **Seattle Game Con v2.1**, Seattle Centre, Seattle, WA. Gaming convention. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information, see www.seattlegamecon.com.

April 12 – on this date in 1981, Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space on this date in 1961; and the space shuttle *Columbia*, with Jon Young and Robert Crippen on board, flew into space for the first time.

April 13 – on this date in 1970, *Apollo 13*, with crew members James Lovell, Fred Haise, John Schweigert, suffered an accident in space which blew up the oxygen tank.

April 13-16: **Norwescon 29** at the Doubletree Seattle Airport Hotel. Writer GoH: Lois McMaster Bujold, Artist GoH: Donato Giancola, TM: Robert J. Sawyer, Featured Publisher: DAW Books with Betsy Wollheim & Sheila Gilbert. Theme: "Journeys, Adventures and Quests of Fantastic Fiction." Rooms: write Doubletree Seattle Airport Hotel, 18740 International Blvd., Seattle, WA 98188, phone (206) 246-8600, or fax (206) 431-8687; rooms \$102 quad occupancy. Memberships TBA. Norwescon 29, POBox 68547, Seattle, WA 98168-0547, (206) 270-7850, email info@norwescon.org, or see www.norwescon.org.

April 14 and 15: **Gamefest Spokane** in Spokane, Washington. See <http://www.gamefestspokane.net/> for more information.

April 22: **Work Less Party Party**. Also know as the wildest, craziest, most outrageous and best party in Vancouver. If you are interested in helping us organize this event, please come to a meeting at Kishu restaurant (corner of Broadway and Main). Monday March 27th, 8pm. If you are interested in performing in the body arts challenge (\$500 in prizes) please e-mail me at coordinator@worklessparty.org www.worklessparty.org Worklessparty@lists.resist.ca <https://lists.resist.ca/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/worklessparty>

April 24: on this date in 1967, Vladimir Komarov was killed when the parachute lines of the *Soyuz 1* in which he was riding got fouled during

landing; and on this date in 1970, *Dong Fang Hong 1*, the first Chinese satellite, was launched.

April 30: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email lswong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

May 2006

May 5-7: **Corflu 23** at the Comfort Hotel Downtown in Toronto, ON. The original fanzine fans' convention. Memberships CS60, US\$50, UK25. Cheques to Colin Hinz at 148 Howland Avenue, Toronto, ON CANADA M5R 3B5. Contacts: Colin Hinz, asfi@eol.ca, (416) 516-8686; Catherine Crockett, crockett@eol.ca, (416) 516-3571.

May 7: **Calgary Comic & Entertainment Expo**, Calgary Stampede Grounds, Calgary, AB. Guests & memberships: TBA. For more information, www.calgaryexpo.com.

May 19-21: **Keycon 23**, Radisson Winnipeg Downtown, Winnipeg, MB. SF convention. Guests: Jaqueline Carey, Ruth Thompson, Barron Vangor Toth. Memberships: \$35. For more information, www.keycon.org.

May 20: **Olympia Comics Festival in Olympia, WA**. Guests: Jessica Abel, Matt Madden, more TBA. See <http://www.olympiacomicsfestival.org>

May 19-21: **Flatland Fantasy Games Convention**, Hotel TBA, Regina, SK. Memberships: TBA. For more information, www.reginagamers.com.

May 19-22: **Cangames 2006**, Rideau Curling Club, Ottawa, ON. Gaming convention. Guests: TBA. Memberships: \$25 until April 30, \$30 at the door. For more information, www.cangames.ca.

May 20 & 21: **Otafest 06**, Hotel TBA, Calgary, AB. Anime convention. Guests & memberships: TBA. For more information, www.otafest.com.

May 26: **Calgary Comic & Toy Expo**, McMahon Stadium, Calgary, AB. Guests: Pop Mhan, Norm Breyfogle, Ken Steacy, Cary Nord. Admission: \$5. For more information, www.comicandtoy.com.

May 26-29: **Miscon 20** at Ruby's Inn & Convention Center in Missoula, MT. Writer GoH: Jerry Oltion, Artist GoH: Frank Wu, Special GoH: Dragon Dronet. Reservations: 4825 N. Reserve St., Missoula, MT 59808, (406) 541-7829. Rooms \$79 single, \$89 double, with complimentary breakfast buffet. Memberships: \$25 to April 31. Miscon, POBox 7721, Missoula, MT 59807, (406) 251-9463, email chair@miscon.org, or see www.miscon.org.

June 2006

June 2-4: **ConComCon 13** at the Cascade Mountain Inn in Cle Elum, WA. The Northwest's conrunner's con. Focus for 2006: "sharing of information". The organizers from the North American SF Convention aka Cascadia Con will share stuff. A CD and handouts will be provided. For rooms, write the Cascade Mountain Inn, 906 E. 1st St., Cle Elum, WA 98922, phone (509) 674-2380, or fax (509) 674-7099. C-cubed room rate is \$55 – \$75 depending on the room – it would be good to have more room reservations made so that the hotel feels more secure since they are small and not used to professional conferences in this little town. The toll-free number for reservations is 1-888-674-3975. Preregistration: \$25 to May 31, 2006, then \$35 at the door, to ConComCon 13, c/o SWOC, POBox 1066, Seattle, WA 98111. Contact the Ccubed 13 chairman Bobbie DuFault at Chairman@cascadiacon.org or visit the Ccubed Website at www.swoc.org/ccubed/.

June 4: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email lswong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

July 2006

July 1-4: **Westercon 59/Conzilla** at the San Diego Marriott Mission Valley in San Diego, CA. GoH: Walter Jon Williams, Artist GoH: Bob Eggleton, FanGoH: Bobbi Armbruster, TM: Kevin J Anderson. Reservations: 8757 Rio San Diego Dr., San Diego, CA 92108, (619) 692-3800, rooms \$139 quad occupancy. Memberships: \$70 to June 15, \$80 at the door. Conzilla, POBox 845, Ramona, CA 92065, email info@conzilla.info, or see www.conzilla.info.

July 7-9: **TT20/Canvention 26** at the DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel, Toronto, Ont. Guests include: Amber Benson, played Tara on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; Michael Shanks, plays Dr. Daniel Jackson on

Stargate SG-1 (Sunday Only). MC Larry Stewart. New additions: LEXA DOIG (*Andromeda*, *Stargate SG1* and *The 4400*) and RICHARD HATCH (*Battlestar Galactica*, both versions). TT20 once again hosts the Prix Aurora Awards for contributions to Canadian SF and fandom. Rooms are at the DoubleTree International Plaza Hotel: 655 Dixon Road, Toronto, Ont. You can now call the DoubleTree International Plaza to book your hotel room at: (416) 244-1711 or 800-222-8733. Don't forget to mention you are booking for Toronto Trek to get the convention rate of \$129. OR you can book online and use the conference code of TNO. Visit our web page at <http://www.tcon.ca> for links and information. Rates are only guaranteed until June 5, 2006 and while rooms are still available in our room block. Pre-Registration Fee: Adult full weekend, \$60; deadline is May 26, 2006. Notes: All prices are subject to change. Enclose a cheque or money order payable to: Toronto Trek OR if you wish to pay by credit card: (You will be billed in CDN dollars) and send to: TT20 P.O. Box 7097, Station A Toronto, ON M5W 1X7 Contact: Information Line: (416) 410-TCON (8266) E-MAIL: tt-info@tcon.ca; WEB: <http://www.tcon.ca>.

July 8 & 9: **Animethon 13**, Grant MacEwan College, Edmonton, AB. Anime convention. Memberships: Various levels, see website. For more information, www.animethon.org.

July 31 – August 6: **Timeless Destinations** at Best Western Richmond Inn, Richmond, BC. Guests include a honkin' long list of *Battlestar Galactica*, *Earth Final Conflict*, *Stargate SG-1*, *The Collector*, *Smallville*, *Poltergeist*, *Farscape*, *Lexx*, *Xena*, *Andromeda* actors. This grew out of the Gatecon that used to be held in Vancouver. The website (www.timelessdestinations.com) bears links for dealers' registration, and for hotel reservations, but I found no registration page, and no postal address anywhere; I note that the dates span a *week*, and the registration fee is quoted as \$250 "for a full convention *ticket*" (*sid*), including a T-shirt. (This con was pointed out to me by Felicity Walker on Jan. 17, 2006.)

August 2006

Aug. 4-6: **Fandemonium 2006** - Idaho's Media Culture Entertainment Expo! at Nampa Civic Center, 311 E 3rd St. S, Nampa, ID 83651; tel (208) 468-5500. An annual celebration of Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Gaming, Anime, Horror & Comics Fandom. Range of memberships, from 3-Day Adult (Age 13-54): \$30.00, down to free for children 5 and under. Website: <http://www.fandemonium.org/>; Message Board: <http://www.fandemonium.org/fanforum/>. Contact Daniel (Borneo) Armstrong, Fandemonium Chairman, borneo@fandemonium.org.

Aug. 11-13: **Con-Version 22** in Calgary, AB (Hotel & rates TBA). GoHs: David Weber, Larry Niven. Canadian GoH: R. Scott Bakker. FanGoH: John Hertz. Memberships **. Write to Calgary SF & Fantasy Society, P.O. Box 20098, Calgary Place RPO, Calgary, AB T2P4J2; more information at www.con-version.org.

Aug. 18-20: **Anime Evolution**, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC. Anime convention. Guests and memberships: TBA. For more information, see www.animeevolution.com.

Aug 23-27: **Worldcon 64/LACon IV** at the Hilton Anaheim, Anaheim Marriott and Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA. Writer GoH: Connie Willis, Artist GoH: James Gurney, FanGoH: Howard Devore, Special Guest: Frankie Thomas. Reservations: (Hilton) 714-750-4321, (Marriott) 714-750-8000, rooms \$99 single/double. Memberships \$175 to July 1. LACon IV, c/o S.C.I.F.I. Inc., POBox 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409; email info@laconiv.org, or see www.laconiv.com.

August 25-27: **Penny Arcade Expo (PAX)** at Meydenbauer Convention Center, Bellevue, Washington. See: <http://www.pennyarcadeexpo.com>

August 27: **Comix & Stories** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email ls Wong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

September 2006

Sept. 2-4: **Kumoricon 2006** at the Red Lion on the River, Portland, OR. Anime convention. Hotel rooms: write Red Lion on the River, 909 N. Hayden Island Dr., Portland, OR 97218, tel (503) 283-4466. Memberships \$30 to April 30, \$35 to August 10. Information: Kumoricon, 960 Anderson Ln #1, Springfield, OR 97477; email chair@kumoricon.org; see www.kumoricon.org.

Sept. 10: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email ls Wong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

Sept. 22-24: **Foolsap VIII** at the Sheraton Bellevue Hotel in Bellevue, WA. GoH: C.J. Cherryh. A flat-paper-stuff convention, featuring artshow,

dealers' room, programming, a banquet at \$26 a head. Room rates TBA, about \$85/nite; contact Bellevue Sheraton, 100 112th Ave. NE, Bellevue, WA 98004-5817; tel (425) 455-3330; fax (425) 451-2473. Memberships: \$50 to September 21, \$60 at the door to Foolsap, c/o Little Cat Z, POBox 2461, Seattle, WA 98111-2461, or via PayPal to treasurer@foolscapcon.org; URL www.foolscapcon.org.

October 2006

Oct. 6-8: **VCon 31** at the Executive Airport Plaza Hotel, Richmond, B.C. GoHs: Writer GoH Barbara Hambly; ArtGoH, Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk; FanGoH: Randy McCharles. Chair: Clint Budd. Dealers' Liaison: Greg Slade. Adult memberships: until April 15, \$40; until Sept. 15, \$50; at the door, \$60. Child in Tow rates TBA; Tot in Tow, free. Daily Memberships: Friday only, \$30; Saturday, \$35; Sunday, \$25. Registrar: Howard Cherniack, #302 - 1330 Graveley Street, Vancouver, BC V5L 3A2, tel. (604) 255-0796, email cherns@compuserve.com. See also www.v-con.ca.

Oct 7: **24 Hour Comics Day**. More info at <http://www.24hourcomics.com/>

Oct. 13-15: **Anglicon 18** at the Holiday Inn Seattle Airport, Seattle, WA. GoHs: TBA. Rooms: Write Holiday Inn Seattle Airport, 17338 International Blvd., Seattle, WA 98188, tel (206) 248-1000. Memberships \$25 prereg, \$50 at the door. Write Anglicon 18, PO Box 75536, Seattle, WA 98175-0536; tel (206) 789-2748; email angliconinfo@yahoo.com, or see www.anglicon.com.

Oct. 22: **Model, Toy and Collectables Show** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email ls Wong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~lswong/Comicon.html>

November 2006

Nov. 2-5: **World Fantasy Con 2006** at the Renaissance Hotel at the Arboretum, Austin, TX. GoHs: Glen Cook and Dave Duncan, TM: Bradley Denton, Editor GoH: Glenn Lord, Artist GoHs: John Jude Palencar, Gary Gianni. Reservations: 9721 Arboretum Blvd., Austin, TX 78759, (512) 343-2626. Memberships TBA?? World Fantasy, c/o FACT Inc., POBox 27277, Austin, TX 78755, email wfcinfo@fact.org, or see www.fact.org/wfc2006/

Nov. 5: **Vancouver Comicon** at the Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street (Main & 15th Ave.), Vancouver, BC. Dealer Tables: \$45/wall; \$35/centre. Admission: \$3.00 Kids under 14: free. For more information, email ls Wong@uniserve.com, call 604-322-6412 or see <http://mypages.uniserve.com/~ls Wong/Comicon.html>

Nov. 17-19: **Orycon 28** at the Portland Marriott Waterfront, Portland, Oregon. Guests of Honor: Editor: [Ellen Datlow](#); Writer: [Cory Doctorow](#). Registration rates are: \$35 to July 15; \$45 to Oct. 31; \$55 thereafter and at the door. Children age 6-12 are half price. Children 5 and under are free. Children must be accompanied by an adult with a membership. To transfer a membership, send a signed letter to the convention PO box (below) with the new member's name and address. [Registration Form](#) (for download in MS Word format). Mail registration to: Orycon 28 PO Box 5464 Portland, OR 97228-5464, USA. URL: www.orycon.org

You're Supposed to Know This Kind of Stuff

WE WERE ROBBED

Christina Carr and Martin Hunger suffered a break-in on or about February 14, 2006. The thieves took all their cameras, a laptop, a printer, an iPod, and all attendant cables and disks. Christina was particularly upset at the loss of her art and stories.

RETURN OF THE LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS... GAME

Michael Bertrand writes: "I thought folks might like to play the game for old time's sake. :)" ...

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~pot/infocom/leather.html>

Michael Bertrand, March 20, 2006

((Garth writes: "Some of you may remember the last time BCSFA members of the female persuasion started a mock Amazon/cougar group, named after this early computer game. I remember encountering this Rocky-Horror-esque satire of Saturday-matinee SF at a Don DeBrandt party." -Ed.))

INTERVIEWS:

Schellenberg recently interviewed me for the March 2006 (No.22) issue of *Challenging Destiny*. The interview is online now at

<http://www.challengingdestiny.com/interviews/kernaghan.htm>."

Donna McMahon says "This is a very good interview."

Donna McMahon, March 13, 2006

Lynda Williams' online interview of GARTH SPENCER, once-famous faneditor. He describes the minor epic of *The Maple Leaf Rag*, the Royal Swiss Navy, and the ongoing battlefield known as *BCSFAzine*. This interview with the sinister mastermind of an international humorist underground is now online at *On Spec Magazine's* blog; see

<http://onspecmagazine.blogspot.com/>

Lynda Williams, March 14, 2006

SEMI-NEW CLUB

"I recently learned that the local Harry Potter Meetup group has been revived, under the name "Muggles for Magic":

<http://harrypotter.meetup.com/450/>

Greg Slade, Feb. 25, 2006

SMD FORUMS!

"Check out <http://smd.ipfox.ca/forum/index.php!>

"It's some forums we've set up for a new and upcoming (someday!) skit comedy show that just happens to have me as the head writer. :)

"But that's not the whole reason for the forums to exist. Mostly, I want the forums to be a place for people to be funny. That's right, you read it here, this is a place where you're not just allowed to be funny, you're encouraged to be as whacked out funny as you wanna be. :)"

"So c'mon along and join. I hope to make it a very funny place. :)"

Michael Bertrand, March 14, 2006

VCON WIKI REMINDER

"This is just a quick reminder of the new **VCON Wiki** <<http://www.v-con.ca/wiki/doku.php?id=start>> that we're testing, and an invitation to check it out and comment on it. As soon as we're happy with it we'll be switching the main site to it.

"A Wiki, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the runaway phenomenon of Wikipedia.org which just recently hit one million user-contributed pages, is a collaborative website where users can edit the pages. The syntax is very simple, no HTML needed, so anyone can add a page, link to a photo, fix a spelling mistake, etc.

"As an example, a link is [<http://google.com>] and a photo is {<http://photo/url>}, *Bold* _Underlined_, etc.

"Thanks to everyone who has already checked out the site, and especially to Shaddy and Barbara."

Tammie and Clayton <bcsfa@kelora.org>, 12 Mar 2006

PI DAY

March 14 is now Pi Day, and March 14, 2006 was the 300th anniversary of the introduction of the symbol (π). See

<http://www.mobot.org/education/megsl/pi.html>

Don Glover to SF Northwest, march 14, 2006

RIMCON CANCELLED

Rimcon Victoria, the rather large convention planned for this fall, has been cancelled. According to their website, the enterprise was done in by local apathy.

David Malinski, March 12, 2006

((Editor comments: there may be no more than 100 SF fans in any kind of Victoria clubs today, and a new convention start might attract no more than 400, maybe 600 attendees on a good weekend. Rimcon's plans seemed a little ... optimistic. -GS))

GOTH HOUSE NEWSLETTER: 17 FEBRUARY 2006

"'Abandoned Rock & Roll Suicide Storyline' Version 2.3 [is posted at] <http://www.gothhouse.org/> I seem to have gotten off track, and this was supposed to go online Friday a week ago. But it's here now. Hooray. And now, off to Radcon!"

Julie McGalliard, Feb. 17, 2006

GOTH HOUSE NEWSLETTER: 10 MARCH 2006

High School of the Damned prologue:

<http://www.gothhouse.org/>

Also, I didn't send the newsletter when the update was my misfortune cookie web toy, here:

http://www.gothhouse.org/gh_toys/misfortune01.php

Because I wanted a chance to look at it on IE on the PC to make sure that the images still worked. I never got that chance. Oh, well. If you are using IE on a PC and it doesn't look right, let me know.

Julie McGalliard, March 10, 2006

CONVENTION UPDATES:

CORFLU 23 (May 2006)

"We are delighted to announce that we finally have a hotel for Corflu

23. The Comfort Hotel Downtown is central, pleasant, and is giving us a good rate. It's at 15 Charles St. E., which is two blocks from Bloor and Yonge. This is where the two main subway lines cross. It's easy to get to from the airport or train station. There are lots of restaurants and shops in the very walkable vicinity.

"...and the Corflu website will be updated soon!"

Colin Hinz, Feb. 21, 2006

CON-VERSION (Aug. 2006)

"Well, it's been several months since I've posted about the more active forum (www.con-version.org/forum), and we've just had a Website Update (we're working really hard to keep the information current and up to date). If you haven't moved over to the forum, now is as good a time as any.

"On the forum, you will find information regarding the current list of Pre-Registered Members (<http://www.con-version.org/forum/index.php?topic=554.0>). Are you on the list? If not, why don't you check out the Pay Pal section of our website and choose the Membership Level that's right for you (<http://www.con-version.org/cv22/vitals.php>). Remember Children under 8 are free, but please do contact registration (registration @ con-version.org) with their information as we will be printing badges for child identification.

"We have confirmed that the Hospitality Inn (Best Western) on Southland and Macleod will be this year's venue, and there are some very exciting things being worked out that I am sure the entire membership will enjoy!

"I've also added more to the Other Conventions section of the Forum, listing as many SFF related conventions as I can come across, they are viewable in the Calendar (<http://www.con-version.org/forum/index.php?board=29.0>) or in the Convention Listing Board (<http://www.con-version.org/forum/index.php?action=calendar>). Please keep in mind it's a work in progress if you find that there is a convention missing.

"The meeting schedule for the rest of the CV22 planning year has been listed in the calendar as well as in the Meeting Listings Board (<http://www.con-version.org/forum/index.php?board=41.0>). There is function you can use to indicate if you plan to attend the meeting, this is helpful to know roughly how many people to expect.

"Last, but not least... The Ship of Fools Masquerade Dance is in Full Planning Mode, there will be downloadable posters on the website, in addition to the information. Please note that the location has changed from the Glendale Community Center to the Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Center which will be far easier for our members on Public Transport to find. Also, this Dance is a great opportunity to purchase

your membership (if you don't use PayPal) on the last day before the prices go up!

"And my final words: We're still looking for Volunteers to fill vacant positions! Or just plain volunteer to help get some promoting done, or to volunteer at the Convention, it's never too early to sign up and let the committee know that you'll be there this year!

"Looking forward to seeing you in the Future!"

Carolyn Sallay, Registration/Webmaster/Forum, Feb. 22, 2006

www.con-version.org

<http://www.con-version.org/forum/index.php>

OLD HOBBY WITH A NEW TWIST

For a few years David Drimbelbee was just a regular Pez collector. Drimbelbee had been concerned with the amount of space his collection was occupying. He had thought of various ordinary ways to display his collection but none had really appealed to him.

Finally, on April 1 of last year, a new idea came to him as he was walking past a taxidermist's store and saw the animal head mounts and decided that he would put the Pez heads into head mounts and place them on his walls. "Not only does this method free up space on my bookshelves, but it frees up space on all the other furniture and now the only Pez that is in danger of falling onto the floor is the Pez I carry around with me for eating purposes.

"My friends call me the 'Pez head-hunter' now," he says with a smile." ...

Forwarded by Julian Castle, March 14, 2006

I SEE A BAD SUN RISING

"March 10, 2006: It's official: Solar minimum has arrived. Sunspots have all but vanished. Solar flares are nonexistent. The sun is utterly quiet.

"Like the quiet before a storm.

"This week researchers announced that a storm is coming—the most intense solar maximum in fifty years. The prediction comes from a team led by Mausumi Dikpati of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). "The next sunspot cycle will be 30% to 50% stronger than the previous one," she says. If correct, the years ahead could produce a burst of solar activity second only to the historic Solar Max of 1958.

"That was a solar maximum. The Space Age was just beginning: Sputnik was launched in Oct. 1957 and Explorer 1 (the first US satellite) in Jan. 1958. In 1958 you couldn't tell that a solar storm was underway by looking at the bars on your cell phone; cell phones didn't exist. Even so, people knew something big was happening when Northern Lights were sighted three times in Mexico. A similar maximum now would be noticed

by its effect on cell phones, GPS, weather satellites and many other modern technologies.” ...

Forwarded by Gary Meuse from NASA home page, March 10, 2006

NEBULA SHORTLIST.

“NOVEL Geoff Ryman, *Air*; Joe Haldeman, *Camouflage*; Terry Pratchett, *Going Postal*; Susanna Clarke, *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell*; Jack McDevitt, *Polaris*; John C. Wright, *Orphans of Chaos*.

“NOVELLA Bud Sparhawk, ‘Clay’s Pride’ (*Analog* 7/04); Robert J. Sawyer, ‘Identity Theft’ (*Down These Dark Spaceways*); Paul Witcover, ‘Left of the Dial’ (*SCI FICTION* 9/04) Kelly Link, ‘Magic for Beginners’ (*Magic for Beginners*); Albert Cowdrey, ‘The Tribes of Bela’ (*F&SF* 8/04).

“NOVELETTE Kelly Link, ‘The Faery Handbag’ (*The Faery Reel*); Daniel Abraham, ‘Flat Diane’ (*F&SF* 10/04); James Patrick Kelly, ‘Men are Trouble’ (*Asimov’s* 6/04); Eileen Gunn & Leslie What, ‘Nirvana High’ (*Stable Strategies and Others*); Paolo Bacigalupi, ‘The People of Sand and Slag’ (*F&SF* 2/04).

SHORT K.D. Wentworth, ‘Born-Again’ (*F&SF* 5/05); Dale Bailey, ‘The End of the World as We Know It’ (*F&SF* 10/04); Carol Emshwiller, ‘I Live With You’ (*F&SF* 3/05); Nancy Kress, ‘My Mother, Dancing’ (*Asimov’s* 6/04); Margo Lanagan, ‘Singing My Sister Down’ (*Black Juice*); Anne Harris, ‘Still Life With Boobs’ (*Talebones* Summer 05); Richard Bowes, ‘There’s a Hole in the City’ (*SCI FICTION* 6/05)

“SCRIPT Battlestar Galactica ‘Act of Contrition/You Can’t Go Home Again’; Serenity.

“ANDRE NORTON AWARD (YA) Louise Spiegler, *The Amethyst Road*; Ann Halam, *Siberia*; Susan Vaught, *Stormwitch*; Holly Black, *Valiant: A Modern Tale of Faerie*.”

Ansible 224, March 2006

THE LIVING DEAD.

“*The Bookseller* gave its Diagram Prize for Oddest Book Title of the Year to a self-help book about being haunted, entitled *People Who Don’t Know They’re Dead: How They Attach Themselves to Unsuspecting Bystanders and What to Do About It*. (Reuters, 3 March) [BT] I think I’ve met a number of these people at sf conventions.”

Ansible 224, March 2006

OBITUARIES

Andreas Katsulas, best known as G’Kar in the *Babylon 5* series as well as several Star Trek appearances, died Feb. 13 after a battle with cancer. He was 59.

Isaac Alexander, SF Northwest, Feb. 14, 2006

Octavia Butler 1947-2006

"Octavia Butler is one of the names appearing on our list to consider for GoH status. Unfortunately, Steven Barnes is reporting that she fell yesterday. Neighbors thought it was a stroke and she was rushed to the hospital, where the doctors found blood pooling in her brain. They were unable to save her."

Bobbie Dufault, SFNorthwest, Feb. 26, 2006

"Octavia Butler (1947-2006), distinguished and much-admired black US sf author, died with shocking unexpectedness on 25 February after a fall outside her house. She was 58. Butler won 1984 Hugo awards for 'Bloodchild' (short story) and *Speech Sounds* (novelette); the latter also won the Nebula, as did her 1998 novel *Parable of the Talents*. Most unusually for an sf author, she received a MacArthur Foundation 'genius grant' in 2000. Newspaper and on-line obituary coverage has been extensive, and rightly so. I was proud and slightly overawed to be on the guest list with her at Intervention, the 1997 UK Eastercon."

Ansible 224, March 2006

Darren McGavin RIP 2006

"It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Darren McGavin at approximately 7:10 A.M. Pacific time today, Saturday 25, 2006. Darren was just three months short of his 84th birthday. While we suspect none of us can imagine a world without the beloved, feisty little redhead, it is time to reflect, give thanks for his life and hold in reverence his memory. Darren is gone, but in many respects he will always be with us: as Carl Kolchak, fighting authority and battling monsters; the grumpy Old Man sending curses over Lake Michigan; as David Ross, the outsider, Grey Holden, captain of the Enterprise, the irascible detective Mike Hammer or any number of memorable guest star appearances, most notably as Joe Bascome on *Gunsmoke* and as the washed-up old actor from 'Distant Signals.'"

Richard O'Shea, quoting INWFen to SFNorthwest, Feb. 26, 2006
(*Editor comments: Oh wow, they made a screen version of "Distant Signals"? I remember reading the story by Andrew Weiner. -GS*)

Don Knotts, Feb. 2006

US actor Don Knotts, who won five Emmys for playing a bumbling deputy sheriff in comedy 'The Andy Griffith Show,' has died in a Los Angeles hospital aged 81. Knotts won over millions of fans as Deputy Barney Fife in the hugely popular 1960s series. ...

Richard O'Shea, quoting INWFen to SFNorthwest, Feb. 26, 2006

Peter Benchley (1940-2006)

"US author famous for *Jaws* (1974), died on 11 February aged 65. A genre venture was *White Shark* (1994), featuring a Nazi-engineered man/shark hybrid. [GW]"

Ansible 224, March 2006

Dennis Weaver (1924-2006)

"US actor who is best remembered for TV roles but also played the lead in Spielberg's *Duel* (1971), died on 24 February. He was 81. [SJD]"

Ansible 224, March 2006

THOG'S MASTERCLASS.

Dept of Cosmic Ennui. 'A cyclone stood still compared to the White Bird. The flight of bullets, the flight of meteors, the flight of light, were snails in relation to him. He annihilated the far reaches of the universe at hundreds and thousands of light-years per second. A flash in infinity, a silvery bolt through the black, a ghost that was gone more quickly than the messengers of death, the White Bird bored the known universe, and went on.' (Donald Wandrei, *Colossus*, 1934) [TMcD]

Brighter Than You Think Dept. '... it appeared the night sky would be cloudless and the land exposed to the revealing light of the new moon ...' (Terry Brooks, *The Sword of Shannara*, 1977) [CCF]

Visionary Dept. 'Closing his eyes, he stopped in front of the row of sloping narrow windows in the ceiling and gazed at the cold sterile beauty of the stars.' (David Mack, *A Time to Kill*, 2004) [MF]

Dept of Moderate Ruthlessness. '"If you make a sound, I will kill you where you stand." / "What do you mean?" he asked in amazement. / "Exactly what I say. We have returned from ..."' (Captain S.P. Meek, *Awlo of Ulm*, 1931) [TMcD]

Neat Tricks Dept. 'She shrugged with her buttocks.' (Ron Goulart, *The Enormous Hourglass*, 1976) [BA]

Ansible 224, March 2006

RECENT EDGE RELEASES:

Eclipse by K. A. Bedford
(978-1-894063-30-2)
5.5" x 8.5" - Trade Paperback
\$14.95 US - 19.95 CD - 309 Pages

A Game of Perfection by Élisabeth Vonarburg
(978-1-894063-32-6)
5.5" x 8.5" - Trade Paperback
\$16.95 US - 20.95 CD - 360 Pages

Stealing Magic by Tanya Huff
 (978-1-894063-34-0)
 5.5" x 8.5" - Trade Paperback
 \$13.95 US - 16.95 CD - 256 Pages

K. A. BEDFORD WINS AUSTRALIA'S COVETED AUREALIS
 AWARD FOR BEST SF NOVEL
 [Calgary, AB, Canada: February 27, 2006]

EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing issued a statement today announcing that the science fiction novel *Eclipse*, by Australian author K. A. Bedford, is the hands down winner of the coveted Australian Aurealis Award for best science fiction novel of 2005.

The Award was presented in a lavish ceremony this past Saturday, February 25th, 2006, at the Queensland Conservatorium, South Bank, Brisbane, Australia.

The Aurealis Awards are now in their tenth year as Australia's premier awards for speculative fiction.

With over 100 novels and almost 300 short stories entered into the competition, the short list for the Science Fiction category included:

- K. A. Bedford's *Eclipse*/EDGE
- John Birmingham's *Designated Targets*/Macmillan
- Marianne de Pierres' *Crash Deluxe*/Orbit
- Sean Williams and Shane Nix's *Geodesica: Ascent 1*/Harper Collins

The Aurealis judges said (in part): "ECLIPSE by K. A. Bedford comes across as a standard starfleet space adventure until the extraordinarily well-drawn and far from stereotypical characters take over."

Eclipse is Bedford's second science fiction novel. It is currently available in Canadian bookstores as well as selected Australian specialty shops. Mr. Bedford's previous science fiction novel, *Orbital Burn* (a finalist for the 2004 Aurealis Award) received critical acclaim from both mainstream and genre reviewers and media, worldwide.

Eclipse will be released in the USA in March, 2006.

About The Author:

K. A. Bedford was born in Fremantle, Australia in 1963. He attended Murdoch University, in Perth and studied Writing, Theatre, and Philosophy, before becoming actively involved in the Australian SF community. *Eclipse* is his second novel (soon to be followed by *Hydrogen Steel*). He lives with his wife, Michelle, near Perth, Western Australia.

EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing

now includes Tesseract Books
 Brian Hades, Publisher, Feb. 28, 2006
 403-254-0160 (voice) / 403-254-0456 (fax)
 Janice Lynn Shoults
 Marketing Director
 Box 1714
 Calgary, AB
 Canada T2P 2L7
 780-460-1756 (marketing only)
 janice@hadespublications.com
 http://www.edgewebsite.com

MORE MEDIA:

Local alternatives:

"The Blinding Light", a local Vancouver alternative cinema, will be revived. See www.video-monster.com or <http://globeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20060106.gtvideomon06/BNStory/AtPlay?query=%22not+your+average+video+store%22>

Dale McGladdery, Feb. 23, 2006

Mainstream Studio Movies:

<http://www.darkhorizons.com/news06/060223k.php>

Warner Bros. Pictures is already planning the next instalments to *Batman Begins* and *Superman Returns*, with respective helmers Christopher Nolan and Bryan Singer in line to return reports Variety.

While neither director's deal is closed, the studio has hired scribe Jonah Nolan (*Memento*, *The Prestige*) to pen the screenplay for the untitled *Batman* project based on a treatment *Batman Begins* co-writers David Goyer and Christopher Nolan wrote. Legendary Pictures, which put up half the financing for both films is expected to board the sequels and split the budgets 50/50 with Warner Bros, in return splitting all profits 50/50.

One idea being discussed is Singer would direct a *Superman* sequel after he finishes Warner's remake of sci-fi thriller *Logan's Run* which he's also expected to direct when it begins shooting this fall in Vancouver. If Singer did pact to direct a *Superman* sequel, that pic could be shot in Vancouver as well.

Superman Returns is already considered one of the more costly pics in Hollywood history, and studio execs have unofficially put the production budget at \$185 million not including development costs (estimates sit around \$50-70 million). Nolan's *Batman* took in \$205.3 million in the US and \$166.5 million overseas although traditionally Superman has enjoyed wider appeal than the grittier more adult Batman, especially in the US.

It's not clear when the *Batman Begins* sequel would begin shooting, although it would likely start production and be released before the *Superman* sequel. *Batman* and *Superman* sequels could make their debut in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

Felicity Walker, Feb. 23, 2006

Last Guest Con

Michael and Becky Citrak

LastGuestCon was held on January 28 and 29, 2006 at our beloved Radisson (the old Hyatt) at SeaTac, Washington. This was the site for many a science fiction convention or event including the 1961 Worldcon, Norwescon, Rustycon, Anglicon, and the list of cons goes on and on. As part of the Airport expansion, the hotel will be torn down. Light Rail will go in its place. So, we had a party celebrating all of our past memories there. The hotel closed on February 1, 2006.

LastGuestCon was a great relax-a-con. We reminisced, told stories, and laughed (a lot), had displays from the various conventions, had a great hospitality, had a survivor's brunch, played poker, watched video footage from Rustycon and Norwescon and watched the ending of the movie "The Slender Thread", made in 1965. The hotel was a location used in the movie. Also, we got GPS points around the hotel for future plotting use. (We are such nerds!)

The program book was full of images and stories from various people about their memories at the hotel. The program book is beautiful. Each member also received a souvenir glass or mug with a tombstone logo and words "Northwest Fandom's Hotel 1961-2006."

Why only 62 number memberships? Originally we thought we might have 300 members, and then later we revised this downward to 100, but why only 62. We thought we would do this in 2008, but in mid July 2005 we found out that the Port of Seattle changed their minds and would close Feb 1, 2006. This shorted prep time and being early in the year (not too long after Christmas and Rustycon), did hurt our numbers. But we did have a great time.

Books

by Donna McMahon
SHAMAN'S CROSSING, Robin Hobb (Harper Collins, 05)

CAGEBIRD, Karin Lowachee (Warner Aspect, Apr/05)
STATES OF GRACE, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (Tor, Sept/05)
JONATHAN STRANGE & MR. NORRELL, Susanna Clarke
(Bloomsbury, 2004)

* * *

Shaman's Crossing, Robin Hobb (Harper Collins, 05)

There are few things that interest me less than military fiction, so it's a real tribute to Robin Hobb (aka Megan Lindholm) that I found myself entirely engrossed in *Shaman's Crossing*, the story of a soldier's upbringing and his early career as a cadet at military academy. This first novel in a new trilogy from Harper Collins reminded me just a little of *Master and Commander* – a movie I didn't expect to like but found riveting.

In Gernia first sons are their fathers' heirs, second sons are soldiers and third sons enter the priesthood. It has always been that way, and it would never occur to Nevare Burvel to question his destiny as the second son of a second son. His father was a hero two decades earlier when the King's Cavalry conquered the nomadic tribes of the grasslands, and now he expects to make his own career on the new frontier – the mountainous forest lands that will give Gernia access to another coast.

Still, he doesn't expect his father to send him for training with an old enemy – a fierce Kidona warrior. And when he survives that life-changing ordeal, it is only to encounter worse perils from his own people. Nevare travels from his home on the plains to the city of Old Thares to enter the King's Academy, and discovers that deep divisions in Gernian society are reflected in the Academy, where brutal hazing rituals threaten to become murderous.

There's no question that this is a riff on the American frontier, right down to the level of technology. And yet, Hobb manages to put her own spin on the scenario, so it doesn't seem like a cheap horse opera or spaghetti western. This world has abundant gritty detail, and her society's politics are both complex and utterly believable.

Shaman's Crossing is not alternate history – it's Fantasy. Nevare is introduced to a very real spirit world by the Kidona warrior, and the primitive peoples of the forest – the Specks – are using magic to fight for their own survival against an overwhelming and technologically advanced foe. As always it is Hobbs' vivid characterization and emotional suspense that carries the novel. Long time Hobbs fans will be very pleased with this latest book, and new readers should discover a fine writer.

Look for *Shaman's Crossing* to turn up on many award ballots this year.

* * *

CAGEBIRD, Karin Lowachee (Warner Aspect, Apr/05)

Cagebird is not precisely a sequel. Like Orson Scott Card's "Ender's Shadow", it is a parallax book in which events from one novel are explored again through another character. Lowachee started this unusual parallax series with her first novel, *Warchild* in which Jos Musey, an orphan escaping from pirates, was trained by aliens to fight against humanity. Her second book, *Burndive*, focussed on the simultaneous exploits of Ryan Azarcon, spoiled son of a famous Earth captain. And now she's back again, hitting events from a third angle in *Cagebird*, the story of a pirate's protege, Yuri Kirov.

In Lowachee's future universe, a war is raging between Earth and the alien "strit" race. Some human renegades have taken the side of the strits, and human pirates are capitalizing on the chaos to prey on victims everywhere.

Yuri Kirov is only a small child when his home colony is destroyed by the aliens and, after a confused evacuation, his family washes up at a barren, remote refugee camp. The kids run half wild in the camp, and eventually Yuri is recruited by a visiting "merchant" ship.

Once he goes aboard he discovers that the ship is manned by pirates, and that his angelic good looks have drawn the attention of the captain, Marcus. Marcus takes over his life, manipulating him emotionally and sexually, and grooming him for eventual command.

That's all backstory, filled in as the novel progresses. The main action takes place after Marcus's death. Yuri, now 22 and taken captive by Earth forces, is released from prison in a staged escape so that he can infiltrate his own people. Now he's the tool of ruthless and manipulative Black Ops operatives, as well as being still a prisoner of his own training and his angry, twisted sexuality.

I'll admit that I had trouble sticking with this book. This is an extremely violent narrative, related with uncompromising intensity. Readers who have a low tolerance for brutality and disturbing sex had best avoid this (especially those who will be upset by homosexual scenes and child abuse).

I also bogged down in detail. The degree of political backstory that has built up in Lowachee's universe is very considerable, and what with all the flashing back and forward, I simply got confused, even though I had read the other two books. Aspects of the plot also troubled me. Yuri is attracted to a man named Finch who he meets in prison—so much so that he breaks Finch out with him. Yet, I never found that at all plausible—in fact, Finch's entire presence in the book seemed much too convenient, and Finch himself seemed sketchy compared to other

characters, not to mention unconvincing as either a hardened prisoner or a love interest. Most seriously, I was unable to empathize with Lowachee's troubled protagonist and, despite his ordeals, lost interest in whether or not he achieved redemption.

Lowachee is a talented writer and I respect the way she portrays the terrible human cost of war, yet I didn't like *Cagebird* (or *Burndive*) anywhere near as much as her first novel, *Warchild*. I'm hoping she'll be moving onto different ground in her next novel.

* * *

STATES OF GRACE, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (Tor, Sept/05)

About half way through *States of Grace*, the latest instalment in the immortal exploits of the vampire St. Germain, I had to ask myself: what on Earth is it that makes me keep coming back to Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's novels? The probable answer is nostalgia. When *Hotel Transylvania* came out in 1978, featuring St. Germain as a courtly and enlightened vampire in Louis XV's Paris, it was a fresh and welcome addition to the vampire subgenre. And *Blood Games* (1980), in which St. Germain meets the noblewoman Olivia Clemens in Nero's Rome, is an outstanding historical novel set against a vivid and thoroughly researched background.

But St. Germain has become a formula. After close to two dozen outings ranging from ancient Rome to the 20th century, and from China and India to Europe and America, his adventures are wearily predictable. He moves to new city/country/century. He meets and woos a damsel even though locals are suspicious of his foreign ways and jealous of his wealth, and war/persecution looms on the horizon. And why, oh why, is his manservant Roger still following him around and cleaning his boots after two millennia? Roger, get a new job!

Ah well, here we go again. During the tumult of the Reformation, St. Germain is living in Venice, and trying to keep his European publishing businesses from being closed down by the Inquisition. In these inflammatory times, anyone who writes and publishes intellectual works outside a narrowly prescribed range of religious subjects is open to persecution and St. Germain—impossibly noble and suave as always—is trying to protect his authors, even though he himself is in great peril if his nocturnal secret is revealed. And of course there's a woman—this time a lovely and talented musician who becomes his mistress. As always, the story is revealed in a combination of narrative and correspondence. And as always, Yarbro's research and period description are as impeccable as St. Germain's wardrobe.

States of Grace is considerably shorter than most of Yarbro's previous instalments, but her plots have always been ponderous, so only purists

and history buffs will miss the extra length. Personally, I always found the vampire Olivia to be a far more lively and interesting character than eternal stuffed shirt, St. Germain, so I keep hoping for a return to something more like *A Flame in Byzantium* – a chilling novel of a lone, independent woman attempting to survive in a bitterly misogynistic city. Meanwhile, *States of Grace*, despite a lovely cover, is strictly by the numbers and will only interest diehard Yarbrow fans.

* * *

JONATHAN STRANGE & MR. NORRELL, Susanna Clarke
(Bloomsbury, 2004)

I'm just going to say a few words about *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell*, since I finally caught up with this book over Christmas and now I find it's on the Nebula ballot. Anybody who takes a delight in Dickens or Thackeray, or in Neal Stephenson's *Cryptonomicon* books, is likely to have a fine time reading Susanna Clarke's first novel. This is definitely a book that requires you to sit back and enjoy the journey because it is long and discursive, and even has footnotes. But the journey is full of delight – quaint period detail, sly characterizations, and charming language.

In 1806 many leisured men study magic as a pastime, but since everyone knows that practical magic is ancient history, they do not attempt to cast spells. That is, until Mr. Norrell, a reclusive and eccentric gentleman, creates a sensation with a stunning display of magic and declares that he will champion the return of magic to England.

Although Norrell moves to London, he is a solitary man by nature, and does not easily mix in society – until he meets and takes on an outgoing apprentice, Jonathan Strange. Together they are a sensation. But friction builds between them. Norrell is determined to suppress all knowledge of the Raven King, the greatest magician of England's history, because he knows that the ancient magic is dangerous, while Strange longs to conjure up the Raven King and travel the long abandoned fairy roads. What neither of them realizes is that Norrell's meddling has already drawn the fairies' capricious and treacherous attention and they are in peril.

Susanna Clarke certainly has a knack for writing antique prose without actually burying her reader under verbiage. I only caught a couple of anachronisms, and she managed something that few historical writers do – she conveyed that odd sense of dislocation one feels reading real historical writing. England of two centuries ago was more culturally different than we often appreciate – and people were different, too. Part of the charm of this book is how well she conveys that.

After a long and very slow build up (it takes almost 200 pages for Jonathan Strange even to show up), I wasn't holding out much hope for a

strong conclusion, but Clarke surprised me. This novel gathers momentum, and in the final chapters there is a great deal of action, culminating in a most satisfactory resolution.

I wouldn't be surprised if *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell* wins the Nebula. It's entirely unique and a startling tour de force for a first novel.

Media File

By Ray Seredin

I guess it was Eric, a friend from elementary school in Van Anda, BC that told me about...you know...it...He said that he could outsmart even Mr. Spock by keeping his cool in the most dangerous situations. However, I lived in a area without cable and couldn't watch...it...until I when back to my uncle's place in London, Ontario where I first saw...it...I liked...it...and wanted to see more of...it...But, the next day I was on a train heading back to my cable-less home...I then saw...it...again just about a year later when I moved to Vancouver. That was mid September 1979. And from there...really don't know what I can say...but, from then...I was hooked.

Media File Presents: The Confessions of a Doctor Who Addict

Q: What do you like best about *Doctor Who* in general?

A: There are many things I like about *Doctor Who*.

Q: The storytelling. The BBC never had the large special effects budget like Hollywood's *Star Trek* franchises, so they had to rely on the telling of the story to make *Doctor Who* work. With this idea behind it, about 23 of the episodes are what I consider good science fiction media programming because it didn't depend on expensive special effects to tell the story. The other 13 of the episodes were not as good, but slightly better than most of the special-effects-crammed series that came out of Hollywood at the same time.

Q: The TARDIS. Since the Doctor's ship can travel in both time and space, a *Doctor Who* adventure can take place any time or any where in the history of the Universe. Many of the adventures start out with very few science fiction elements. The only thing the Doctor knows is that something is seriously wrong in a planet's history and, being a Time Lord

(the first people in the Universe to successfully combine the single theory of relativity with quantum mechanics), he is the only one that can make it right again.

A: (1) The actors: Most of the actors who played the Doctor and his companions were at their best playing the parts. Most dramatic performers in Britain are Shakespearean-trained and know the kind of emotions they need to show the audience what their character is feeling. I bet you good money that most American actors can't express the emotions of a woman from the past stepping outside the TARDIS for the first time in the 21st Century to see a 747 take off from a busy airport and show the feeling of true amazement. (Or back in her own time when she first steps into the TARDIS then quickly darts outside again and asked the Doctor "Why is it bigger on the inside than the outside?") Or a story later – when she comes face to face with something like a Sontaran – with real fear on her face. Also the casting person on *Doctor Who* (and most other British made TV programs) don't always go for an actor if the only reason the audience tunes in is to watch him, because he/she can stop all of London when he/she drops a comb. Both the Doctor and companions look like real people that you may see walking down the street each day.

(2) The humour. As a young kid, I got to see the James Bond movies, *The Pink Panther* and TV series like *The Goodies* and (of course) *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. So when most of my friends were watching "Baby Carrie" trapped in the hole on *Little House on the Prairie*, I was watching the Dead Parrot stench with two very confused parents looking on wondering what I found so funny in it. This is why I like the dry British humour, that very often shows up on *Doctor Who*. The Doctor could be jumping around at the end of a story shouting "Everybody lives," because none of the characters died. Or when he can't find his sonic screwdriver 'til the very last second and says "Oh, here it is," before he saves the day. I wish more science fiction programming would put dry humour in their stories, because it would make their characters more human. In a nutshell the whimsy of *Doctor Who* won me over.

Q: How many years has *Doctor Who* been on television?

A: With the season now airing on Sci-Fi Channel they are 26 seasons of *Doctor Who*, with season 27 coming to the CBC later this year, though many series fans say it's 29 seasons because they count the 1985 season that was not produced due to changes in BBC management.

Q: Who is the Doctor?

A: The Doctor (please don't call him Doctor Who) is a Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey, who (maybe) is the last of his race. He's a cross of Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy, Scotty, James Bond, Sherlock Holmes, Doc Emmet Brown and Frasier Crane. Oh, yes the actors who play the Doctor put a lot of themselves into the character. So far ten actors (take that, James Bond) have played the role. They are William Hartnell (1963-1966), Patrick Troughton (1966-1969), Jon Pertwee (1970-1974), Tom Baker (1974-1981), Peter Davison (1982-1984), Colin Baker (1984-1986), Sylvester McCoy (1987-1989 as well as the 1996 Fox/BBC TV-movie), Paul McGann (the 1996 Fox/BBC TV-movie), Christopher Eccleston (2005) and David Tennant (2005-?). After reading the names of all the actors who played the role, you are asking yourself "how can the Doctor be the same character?" The answer's "regeneration." When the Doctor is fatally ill or injured, his body "regenerates." He now has a new body that looks different from his old one, and very likely has a new personality to go along with it. However, he retains all his memories from his past lives. He travels around time and space in his ship the TARDIS (Time And Relative Dimensions In Space) that looks like a 1930s London Police Telephone Call Box from the outside, though in fact it's a lot bigger on the inside. (A cartoon in the British humour magazine *Private Eye* had a series fan that keeps his copy of "The Complete Type 40 TARDIS Deck-Plans in 1500th Scale" in a large truck's trailer.) I don't know if he really knows how to operate the ship. In fact it should be operated by a large crew of Time Lords, not just one. So when the TARDIS is supposed to land at Nameless Lake, Manitoba on July 17, 1409, there's a 99.9% chance that it lands in Vancouver, British Columbia on July 17, 2009. This fact is well used by the series writers in their storytelling. He is a time- and space-traveling troubleshooter, because wherever he shows up trouble is either there or soon to show up. Though the Doctor and his companion are usually there for something totally unrelated to the trouble (even if it's 600 years ahead in time from when they should be), they end up kicking its butt and then before any questions can be asked they leave...much in the American tradition of a classic Wild West hero. Having been a series fan for over 25 years, I have a strange feeling that the Doctor doesn't find trouble; trouble finds the Doctor and he's enjoying every minute of it.

Q: Of all the actors who played the Doctor, who is your favourite?

A: It's a tie between Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker.

Jon Pertwee was the first actor I saw in the role as the Doctor. He reminded me of an older man who lived in the village I grew up in. He was a world traveler and a few times a year he would come into the school to show his slides and tell us stories of his adventures. He would have

been the Third Doctor if he'd just owned a time- and space-traveling police-box, and had a companion named Jo Grant.

I didn't like Tom Baker at first. (What happened to Jon Pertwee?) Then I heard about "regeneration" and started to enjoy his adventures. He reminded me of a substitute teacher I had in elementary school. This man somehow forgot that the 1960s were over for seven years by the time I first met him. (I've seen him this past Christmas. He now works for BC Ferries and he still doesn't know that the '60s are over.) The Fourth Doctor (to me) is the quintessential 1967 hippie whose beat-up VW bus is a certain Police Box.

Q: Who are the companions?

A: The companion is the person or being who travels with the Doctor and takes part in his adventures. Though for most of the series he had only one companion, usually a female Earth human, during the early years and for a while in both the '70s and '80s, he had two or three companions, usually a male and a female(s). At first the female companions did little other than ask the Doctor "What do we do now, Doctor?" or scream their heads off each time they saw a monster (34 of the time it was harmless), but when you also look at classic Trek you also notice that the female crewmembers did little other than ask Kirk "What do we do now, Captain?" or scream their heads off each time they seen a monster (that also 34 of the time was harmless). The role of women in media science fiction has changed along with their roles in our society. Rose, the companion of the current Doctor, is on par with or better than most of the women on any American media series, and is as good in some fashions as the Doctor himself. Each companion brings her own touches to the series story telling. Sometimes the Doctor/companion relationship is clicking over like a well-oiled machine while at other times is like an old truck trying to climb a steep hill. This makes for good character building and adds a certain edge too some of the stories.

Q: Who is your favourite companion?

A: As with the Doctor, it's a tie.

Leela of the tribe of Sevateem was pure instinct ("Move and I'll cut your heart out"), though her relationship with the Fourth Doctor was as good as Spock's, if he had a pet wolf/pit-bull cross. If not for him she would have killed everyone else in a story. Like any other heterosexual male, I loved her in her skins. (Even better, a fellow series fan, a lady bus driver in Victoria, wore the skins to work on the #14 route on Halloween in 1987.) I also liked when she ran around the 1880s London sewer dressed only in Victorian underwear.

Ace was just plain cool (or wicked as she would put it). Somehow she got transported from 1987 suburban Perivale to the far-off planet Svartos where she meets the Seventh Doctor. Since the Seventh Doctor occasionally likes to make his own trouble, her containers of the high-explosive Nitro -9 sure came in handy when it came to blowing up an evil alien's starship or two. She was very much like my friends in high school in the early '80s, living on the edge with the Doctor and loving every minute of it.

Q: Who are the villains on *Doctor Who*?

A: Oh yes, the monsters (note – that are "bug-eyed monster" variety). OK, the best-known monsters on *Doctor Who* are the Daleks ("Exterminate! Exterminate! Exterminate!"), killer armoured mutant space Nazis from the planet Skaro...who at first wanted to take over the whole of creation and make it into their own image, but now their only survivor wants revenge on the Doctor for winning the Time War. (Note: Using A.J. Rimmer's way of thinking, since both races were wiped out in the war, it should have been called a draw.) Then there are the Cybermen, humanoid cybernetic androids with few or no organic parts. Better have some gold dust with you since it is the only thing that can stop them. The Autons, living plastic beings with hands that will kill or vaporize you, controlled by the powerful Nestene Consciousness who wants to make Earth its new homeworld, minus humans. The Sontarans, the extraterrestrial race that brings new meaning to the phrase "I was just following orders. (Kill the Doctor.)" The Ice Warriors, a warring reptile race from a certain red planet so close to us that you have to be saying to yourself "It's only a show, it's only a show!" They are many, many more, so many in fact that it will fill a book, about the size of *The Basic Rules to 43-Man Squamish*.

Q: Who is your favourite series villain?

A: My favourite *Doctor Who* villain is the only one who is almost on par with the Doctor. He is the Master. The Master is another Time Lord who left Gallifrey, but unlike the Doctor, he is what all you *Star Wars* fans call "on the Dark Side." He wants power and is willing to team up with any of the Doctor's enemies to get it, only to backstab them in the end. He tried to take over the Earth about ten times and all of creation twice, only to have the good Doctor stop him at the last minute, or when the other foes turn on him. Somehow he always escapes – well until the Doctor trapped him in the TARDIS core. That should have killed him. Though Russell T. Davies and company said they have no plans to bring the Master to the new series, I have a feeling that he'll be coming back in the third season.

Q: How popular is *Doctor Who* in Britain?

A: I really don't know, since I've never been to Britain. However, from what I've seen, it's right up there with both the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* franchises. Characters from the *Doctor Who* universe have long been part of the UK's pop culture, appearing in humour magazines, newspaper editorial cartoons and comedy TV series. Even the TARDIS itself took then -Prime-Minister Margaret Thatcher to visit disaster victims of the past when she ran out of them in 1989 on one satirical series. Today, with the new series airing, the popularity for it is only growing. Just think how it was here in North America in 1988 after the first season of *Star Trek: TNG*. That's what happening now in Britain with *Doctor Who*.

Q: What do you think caused the cancellation of *Doctor Who* in 1989?

A: I feel that the series went downhill in the second Peter Davison series. The story here is that many viewers were quite upset when his young companion Adric died and the then-head of children's TV at the BBC didn't want death to be part of the series. The ratings started to go down as it played out and at the end of the season the BBC moved the series distribution from the children's to the drama department (the drama department always produced the series). However, by then most of the core writers from the series (before the changes) moved on. The new writers were good, but not great (and went a little overboard by killing all the guest cast's characters in the season opener) and the ratings continued to go down. By the time the first full Colin Baker series hit the air it was on against the very popular American series *The A-Team*, so the ratings fell like a rock and then they brought in a new BBC Controller that thought it was a waste of resources and pulled the plug. The series fans fought back and he was forced to return the series to air after an eighteen-month hiatus on a new night and time, however with only half the number of episodes from what it had in preceding seasons. The ratings went up a little when it returned. Still, the storytelling remained flat. It wasn't until the second Sylvester McCoy series that the stories begin to return to what they were (before Adric died). However, by then the series was airing against the very popular *Coronation Street* and only the core fans were tuning in each week. So it was little wonder when the last classic *Doctor Who* episode aired on December 6, 1989, that it would be quite a while before we saw new episodes again. How much of a part did the series fans play in bringing the series back? The Doctor once said, "This planet's history keeps repeating itself." That's what happens with *Doctor Who* over the 15 years it was not in production and is similar to what happened with *Star Trek* in the years between the classic series and the first movie. At first the series core fans kept it alive, and they brought in their friends,

who brought in their friends. Even with the 1996 Fox/BBC TV movie misstep, the popularity of the series continued to grow into the new millennium.

Q: What do you think about the 1996 Fox/BBC *Doctor Who* TV movie?

A: One word: mistake.

Q: How do you like the new series?

A: It's fantastic! Russell T. Davies knew just what changes it needed in order to bring it to a 21st-century audience. All the stories are highly character-driven and some will even move you. (Like when Rose tries to save her father's life and nearly destroys the whole universe. Or when the Doctor knows that a newly-found friend of Rose's needs to die in order to save the Earth.) This is the good story telling that made the old series so good taken to the next level through 21st-century CGI technology, that is just a little bit quaky as a tip of the hat to the classic series.

Now a few of my friends don't like the new series, feeling that it's too different from classic *Doctor Who*. These people don't realize that the classic series kept changing with the times it was made in, and the 15-year-long hiatus was just too long for a handful of fans. Still, I know many people who never watch the classic series and likely never will, who are huge fans of the new one.

Q: What would you say to a person who enjoys the new series and wants to view classic *Doctor Who*?

A: Rent yourself any Tom-Baker-era episode DVD and tune your mind back to the 1970s (if you weren't around then, just watch an episode of *That '70s Show* before watching the DVD) and enjoy. If Tom Baker doesn't get you into classic *Doctor Who*, nothing will.

Q: What do you want to see in the future on *Doctor Who*?

A: Now if you disagree with me please send me hate mail at lungbarrow@shaw.ca. I would like to see the Doctor regenerate into a female Time Lord (if this happens, please cast Lucy Lawless as the Doctor). Don't ask me why that will happen. It's science fantasy, for crying out loud. It's not real life.

Last Words

COME TO FRED! every Friday at 7 p.m. at Denny's Restaurant on Davie Street at Thurlow, Vancouver, BC

METROTOWN WRITER'S GROUP is open to new members. Meetings are held twice a month at the Metrotown library, on Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. For information call Ken, 604-876-5751 email ktran@vcn.bc.ca

Need skills and experience your business just doesn't have? Consult **CAPRICORN MULTITECH.** Contact Chris Sturges, either by email or by phone (604) 762-0059.

THE RICHMOND WRITERS GROUP meets every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m., at the Richmond Arts Centre, 7700 Minoru Gate. E-mail or phone Bill Marles at bmarles53@yahoo.com or (604) 277-6775, or go to <http://groups.msn.com/richmondwriters/>

Why You Got This:

- ___ You are a member. ___ You are a non-member.
- ___ You trade with us. ___ You contributed.
- ___ You're asking "what does 'trade' mean?"
- ___ I'm trying to get your news about awards/clubs/cons/fan funds/ fanzines/inventions/medical crises/natural disasters/movies/TV shows/sponsorship scandals/ influence peddling/ballot stuffing/wiretapping/parliamentary interns mentioned in this zine.